

DR. WILLIAMS'S

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE

Upon Sunday the 11th of June 1738.

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THE LOVE OF OUR CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH
AND STATE

RECOMMENDED IN A
S E R M O N
PREACHED IN
St. MARY'S CHURCH
BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE

Upon Sunday the 11th of *June* 1738,

Being the ANNIVERSARY of His MAJESTY'S Accession
to the Crown.

By PHILIP WILLIAMS D. D.
President of St. *John's* College and Public ORATOR
of the UNIVERSITY.

C A M B R I D G E.

Printed for W. THURLBOURN, and Mess. INNYS and MANBY
in *Ludgate-Street*, LONDON. MDCCXXXVIII.

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ROM. XIII. 1.

— THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD.

THERE cannot be a greater Encomium upon Civil Government than the Origin here assigned to it; nor a stronger natural Proof of its Divine Authority than the great Advantages it possesses above all the other temporal Means of Happiness, that our Creator has afforded us, both with regard to the extent of its Influence, and the usefulness of it to particular Persons.

AND since we are now assembled to bless God for the peaceable Accession of his present Majesty to the Throne of these Kingdoms, I know of no Topics from whence the true Value of this Blessing can be better illustrated, than by considering

I. FIRST the Benefits of Government in general.

II. SECONDLY the particular Advantages of our own.

III. AND lastly by drawing some Inferences suitable to the present occasion.

I. I AM first to treat of the Benefits of Government in general.

AND to form a just Notion of these; let us view Mankind placed out of Civil Society; and what a degrading Opinion must we entertain of our Species? No Man is sufficient of himself even for Temporal Happiness: Wants, Fears, Dangers, Necessities of every Kind would be the inseparable Attendants of unsocial Life: Thorns and Briars would cover the Face of the Earth; Herbs and Fruits be the principal Food; Leaves and Skins the only Cloathing; and Caves and Dens the common Habitations of Men and Brutes. To this add the Dangers on every Side from Beasts of Prey, and from Men still more savage, and more ingenious to bring Distress upon one another. But in this only would their Sagacity appear to advantage; for to make real Improvements of the Understanding they would have few Opportunities and less Inclination: Objects of Sense would be the Boundaries of their Knowledge, and a more than Brutish Attachment to them the chief Business of their Lives.

FROM this Sketch of uncultivated Life, which I fear is too just, turn your Eyes upon any Nation formed into Society; with what a different Prospect shall we here be entertain'd? No Wants but what Industry will relieve; no Fears, but what Prudence will dissipate; no Dangers but what united Forces will repel. Not only the Necessaries, but also the Conveniencies and Ornaments of Life are the genuine Fruits of a well regulated State;

State ; and Arts and Sciences, which raise at once both the Understanding and the Dignity of Human Nature, are almost the natural Growth of all truly civilized Societies.

FENC'D in this manner by just Laws and an equal Government ; guarded from intestine Broils and foreign Invasions ; secure of Life, Freedom, and Property ; successful in Friendships, Alliances, and all the Relations of Life ; and blessed moreover with that silent but inexpressible Pleasure, which every benevolent Person feels from the Prosperity of the Community, to which he belongs, Men are then as compleatly happy, as ever Providence designed they should be in this World.

BOTH these Views of social and unsocial Life will appear to be true from Facts as well as Reason, for consult either ancient Historians or modern Travellers ; how deplorable is the Condition of those Countries, whose Inhabitants either formerly wanted the Benefit of Laws, or now live without any Government, or even Marks of Humanity but their outward Shape ? View again such Nations, as have been distinguished by good Laws and excellent Governors ; how different is the Face of Things ? gross Darkness and Ignorance overshadow the former ; Learning and Knowledge enlighten the Minds of the latter ; Savage Manners and Brutal Actions are the melancholy Distinctions, by which one Part of our Species are known ; whilst the civilized Nations, who live according to their improved Knowledge, make Virtue the

Standard and mutual Happiness the result of their Conduct. Thus the Jews, who had God for their Lawgiver, give us a just Idea of the Blessings of a regular Government, whilst they liv'd according to those Laws; but of Anarchy and Confusion, "when every Man did what
" was right in his own Eyes."

FROM hence it appears, that a good and just Government is to the Civil, what the Sun is to the Natural World: It enlightens, warms, cherishes and invigorates the whole Political System; it penetrates to the remotest Parts, that are under its Sway, and diffuses suitable Degrees of Happiness to all its various Subjects. To remove therefore this grand Source of Human Happiness out of the World would be like removing the Sun out of the Universe: All thenceforward would be Darkness, Discord and Misery, and the Human Species the most unhappy Part of the Creation.

BUT Thanks be to God, who has form'd us for Society, and has given us the Means of making it conducive both to the Relief of all our Wants, and to the Procurement of every Thing, that is desirable in Life. And this he has done by giving sufficient Powers to the Civil Magistrate to answer all the Ends of his Institution; for upon this Account "the Powers that be, are ordained of
" God to be Ministers for good," are invested with Authority "to execute Wrath upon him, that doth Evil," and in one Word become enabled by their Office to convey

vey to their Subjects all the invaluable Blessings, which have been before observed to be the natural Effects of a just and regular Government.

II. HAVING thus sufficiently considered the Usefulness and Benefits of Government in general we come now to reflect upon the particular Privileges of our own.

WHICH will immediately appear by comparing our own Condition with that of other Nations; all of which we shall find to be governed either under a Monarchy absolute, or inconveniently limited; or under an Aristocracy, or a Republic.

IN the first of these there is no sufficient Security either of Person or Property; all is subject to the arbitrary Will of the Prince; under the second there are so many Embarrassments, Delays and Jealousies, that the Wheels of Government are perpetually clogg'd; and if the Person of the Monarch happens to be Elective, intestine Wars are the general Attendants of his advancement; under the third the Nobles engross that unbounded Power, which is so terrible in single Persons; and in this the Subjects have the manifest Disadvantage of being under the Scourge of many Tyrants instead of one; under the last there is still as much arbitrary Power, tho' lodg'd in inferior Hands; for in this Form some select Part of the People may tyrannize in their turns over the rest, and keep them in as absolute Subjection, as in a Despotic Government. From all which Disadvantages the Form of
our

our Government most happily exempts us. To the Tyranny of a Despotic Power, I bless God, we are absolute Strangers; and the Perplexity of States, inconveniently limited, is equally removed from our Public Councils: Nor are we in danger of the intolerable Yoke of an insulting Nobility; or of the Popular Tumults of the Republican System, which is as contrary to our Laws, as it is to the Genius and Temper of our People.

BUT to give a full and just Description of the Excellence of our own Constitution, requires more Time than the present Discourse will admit; yet still in general and without partiality to ourselves we may truly affirm, that the *British* in all Views appears to be the best Model of Government, that is now establish'd in the known World. In proof of which it may be observ'd, that in the English Nation only, the proper Majesty of a Throne, the true Dignity of the Nobles, and the just Liberties of the People are most happily ballanced and secured; and that among us the Sovereign has all the Power which a good Prince wants; the Nobles all the Authority, that their Birth and Titles demand; and the People all the Weight and Influence, that is due to the Bulk and Strength of every Nation.

THIS wise Adjustment of Power is such in fact, as the great and penetrating *Cicero* formed in Idea for the best Model, that could be framed; and his Words are so apposite, that they seem to be rather a Description of our Civil Constitution after it was formed than the Opinion of a Philosopher so many Centuries before its Existence:

“ * I look

" * I look upon that to be the best kind of Government,
 (says that wise Heathen) " which consists of the Kingly,
 " Aristocratical, and Popular Forms so prudently tem-
 " per'd together, as not to exasperate on the one hand,
 " the native Fierceness of Men by over rigorous Punish-
 " ments, nor to make them run into Licentiousness on
 " the other by too great a Relaxation of Power. A just
 Comment upon which words would be nothing else, but
 an accurate Account of the *British* Civil Constitution,
 which I hope is so impress'd upon every *English* Mind;
 that it wants none; and so fixed in his Heart that no In-
 ducements whatever will prevail with him to erase
 it.

BUT our Ancestors have still improved upon this ex-
 cellent Plan by forming a strict and vital Union between
 that and the Church of Christ; and so strongly are both
 of them cemented together by length of Time and mu-
 tual and inseparable Interests, that it is impossible to
 wound one without injuring the other; to destroy one
 without destroying both; and nothing but the most vio-
 lent Tempest, such as once shipwreck'd both the Royal
 Pilot and the whole Kingdom with him, can totally dis-
 joint so firmly a compacted Body.

By this happy Coalition of the State with the most
 Primitive Model of Christianity, that is now received in
 any Nation under the Heavens, our Idea of the whole

* Statuo esse optime constitutam Rempublicam, quæ ex tribus illis generibus regio, optima-
 tum, & populari confusa modicè, nec puniendo irriter animum immanem ac ferum; nec omnia
 prætermittendo licentiâ cives deteriores reddat. Fragm. apud Non. Marcell.

will be raised very greatly, but not more raised than the Excellence of the whole Scheme will truly justify.

POWER, Freedom, Property, Religion, all excellent in themselves, receive inexpressible Beauties by being placed together in such proper Lights, with such exact Proportions, with so benevolent Aspects upon each other; Power for instance encourages Freedom, secures Property, and cherishes Religion; they in their turns strengthen the Hands of Authority; and all of them together mutually confirm and support each other. In one word wou'd all Ranks and Degrees of Men, of which our Community consists, but once conspire to pay uniform Obedience to the Laws of it, we should then see verified in Fact, what we now admire in Theory, a most excellent Body of Laws, drawn out into real Life, and making the Subjects of them the most envied and happy People in the World.

III. BUT this Happiness can only be gained by such a constant Obedience to all those Laws; and in Consequence of that by a steady Adherence to the Person, and Royal Protestant House of our present most gracious King; and as the just result of both by an universal Benevolence and Affection towards one another. These therefore are the natural Inferences from what has been said, and being suitable to the present Occasion a few Observations upon each of them will justly lay claim to your farther Attention.

I. AND with regard to the first of these Inferences, it is the fundamental Condition of all Societies, that every individual Member should conform to the Laws of his own; This is the only equivalent which he gives for the Protection of his Liberty, Property, and Religion; and therefore is unjust, if upon any occasion he shall presume to break the least of those Laws, upon the Observation of which the Happiness of the whole Community depends.

IT is very manifest, that Thefts, Robberies, Rapes, Adulteries and every instance of Immorality are in a greater or less Degree so many Invasions of the public Happiness; unless therefore a Man has a right to overturn that, he has no right to indulge himself in the commission of these or of any other Crimes of whatever sort.

LOVE of our Country is likewise a Duty, which we owe to the Public; but the distinguishing Property of Love is to consult the Benefit, and conform to the Will of the Object beloved: Our Country declares her Will by her Laws, and in them points out, what will tend to the common Benefit; to pretend therefore Love to our Country, and at the same time to violate the Laws of it even in the minutest Particulars, is Hypocrisy, and Contradiction, and destructive of public Good.

IF to this we add the Sanction of the Church of Christ, which condemns not only actual Rebellion but likewise all Disobedience to the lawful Commands of the Civil Magistrate, he must be a very inconsistent Christian, who does not as religiously conform to the Laws of Man,

as of God; for in short the Laws of Man ultimately derive their force from the Laws of God, and he who offends against one is equally a Transgressor against the other.

I WILL add one Word more with regard to our Ecclesiastical Constitution, which is the principal Part of the whole; for without true Religion all the rest would be very much diminished in their real value, and being confined only to this Life, like that would more frequently be attended with Uncertainties and Troubles.

SINCE then the Ecclesiastical Part of our Constitution has been often and substantially proved to be agreeable to the Word of God, it is plainly the Duty of all, who live under the Benefit of our Laws, to conform to the Religion established by them: This is the primary Intention of our Lawgivers, and the original Command of our blessed Lord by his Apostle, "to submit ourselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake."

WHAT then shall we say of the unhappy Dissenters from the Church of *England*? We will say what the Truth is; that if they separate from Prejudice, Wantonness, or any such unjustifiable Motive, then "Sin lieth at their Door;" but if real and insuperable Scruples of Conscience shall keep them from our Communion, we then make no Question but God will pardon their involuntary Errors, and admit them to his Grace and Mercy through the Merits of our common, and infinitely gracious Redeemer.

IN the mean time, so long as their Scruples shall remain unsatisfied, let them enjoy and be contented with that Indulgence, which the Law grants them; and let it continue to be the Glory of the Church of *England* among all the other Marks of a true Church to be ever distinguished by that most essential one, universal Charity to all Mankind.

2. COME we now to our Second Inference, which was a firm Adherence to the Person and Royal Protestant House of our present most gracious King. In support of which I cannot produce a better Argument than that which *St. Paul* has given, "because he is the Minister of God to us for good," not only in all the common Benefits of Government, which we enjoy by his Protection; but likewise in some particular Advantages, which peculiarly flow from his Reign over us; and these are the Security of our National Rights, and of our Church Establishment: Upon these two essential Points both his Government and our Happiness are founded; and to expect the Preservation of them from any but a Protestant King is I hope a Notion quite banished from the Hearts of all Englishmen.

THERE is scarce such a thing, as just Liberty subsisting at this Day in any Country but our own; and no where; that I know of, so perfect a Pattern of the Primitive Church of Christ. How sincerely thankful therefore ought we to be to that gracious God, who has hitherto preserved those invaluable Blessings to this Nation? And how duely grateful to that Royal Hand, which has the Honour of being the happy Instrument of his Providence

in continuing the Possession of them to us? These Considerations ought to produce a ready and chearful Obedience to all his legal Commands; and require our earnest and constant Prayers for the Prosperity and Success of all his Undertakings for the Benefit and Happiness of his People.

SINCE likewise Kings must necessarily use the Assistance of others to conduct the great Concerns of Government, the same Apostle, who commands us to pray for Them, requires us also "to make Intercession for all that are in Authority;" for whom our Addresses to God ought to be, that in all things they may consult the true Honour of their Prince, the real good of all their fellow Subjects, and the universal Practice of true Religion. This is so reasonable a Duty, that it would be indecent in any Man to make even just Complaints against his Governors for wrong Administration, when he himself refuses to give them the least Assistance, when he refuses to lift up so much as his Hands, or Eyes to Heaven for their faithful discharging of the difficult and important Trusts committed to their Care.

UPON the whole if we would preserve those National Rights, which are the distinguishing Blessings of *English* Subjects; if we would maintain that "Form of sound Words," which our pious Reformers sealed with their Blood; if we are desirous of hindering Popery from ever being a Terror to this Land again, of which I am certain, that all, who hear me, are sincerely desirous; then Duty and Interest point out the sacred Person, upon whom

whom our Loyalty ought to be inviolably fixed; and common Prudence tells us, that next under the good Providence of God it is only from his present Majesty, and his Protestant Heirs after him that we can expect the Preservation of those invaluable Privileges, which we now possess, and Security from those real Evils, which our Enemies on all Sides perpetually labour to bring upon us.

3. BUT that these Benefits, which naturally flow from the Excellence of our Constitution, may be equally diffused, and communicated to all the Members of it, permit me in the last Place and in a very few words to recommend the Practise of universal Benevolence and Affection towards one another.

AND since we are all Members of the same Society both Civil and Ecclesiastical; Since we are all Subjects of the same King, who is the Head of both; have all the same common Interests, and the same common Enemies, we should in reason unite in the same just and prudent Measures to promote the general Happiness. But the Case is far otherwise in Fact; instead of being kindly affectioned, we tear one another in Pieces; instead of “dwelling together, like Brethren, in Unity,” we divide into Factions, and think all things lawful, which are expedient; and nothing unjust; which can ruin or distress the Person or Relatives of any one, whom we think proper to brand as an Adversary — But these Things ought not to be, unless it is lawful “to do Evil that Good may come — and all that can be said to such intemperate Zealots of whatever Denomination is to refer them to the Apostle’s Deter-

Determination against the false Imputers of that impious Tenet to himself, which will certainly fall heavier upon all those, who shall put it into real practice.

BUT since there will be Divisions in State as well as Church, arising from the same Motives, Pride, Avarice, and Ambition, the same Woe †, that is denounced against the Authors of one, will in all Reason be adjudged against the unjust Raisers and Fomenters of the other, since to disturb the Tranquillity of the State is as criminal in the Eyes of God, as to destroy the Peace of the Church.

How therefore shall Men behave in such difficult Circumstances? Let them examine with Impartiality the Views and Pretensions of each contending Party, and chuse that upon mature Judgment, which after a strict and unbiass'd Scrutiny shall appear to be the best: And having thus formed their Judgment without sinister Views of any kind upon Principles of true Polity and Christianity, let them persevere with undaunted Courage in the Cause, which they firmly believe to be right, which they firmly believe to be productive of the greatest Benefits both to the Civil Community and Christian Commonwealth.

BUT then let every Man's Zeal be guided by real Knowledge; and no Temptations whatsoever hurry him on to the Breach either of Christian Charity, or of the least of God's Laws; for better is it to lose all that is judged valuable in this Life, than to retain the Possession

• Rom. III. 8.

† Luke XVII. 1.

of it, or even to gain the whole World itself by the least immoral Act.

IF all Mankind would think and behave themselves in this manner, we might differ in our Sentiments without harbouring Rancour in our Hearts; we might divide upon what we think important Questions without rashly taxing each other with Perfidy and Insincerity; and might amicably determine all manner of Controversies by thus conducting them innocently, and by peaceably submitting to the just and regular methods of Decision. This is the only way which Christianity suggests for calming our Heats, and allaying our Animosities; and if all who call themselves Christians would but once make the Experiment, a great Progress would soon be made towards the Completion of the Cure.

IN the mean time since it is impossible for the most benevolent and powerful Prince, that ever adorned a Throne, to distinguish all his Subjects according to their real or imaginary Merit, let those, who enjoy the immediate Beams of Royal Favour, shine with proportionable Rays of Benevolence upon all their fellow Subjects without distinction; and let those who receive the Warmth of it at a greater Distance, be still easy and contented with the general Blessings of his Reign, and not murmur at the Head, because they have not the imaginary Happiness of being Eyes, or Ears, or some of the more honourable Members of the public Body.

AND

AND that all our Contentions may thus gradually lessen, and at length end in universal Love, and Affection to our King, our Country, and one another, "may the
 " God of infinite Mercies grant thro' Jesus Christ our Lord,
 " to whom with the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one
 " God be all Honour and Glory now and for evermore.
 " *Amen.*



F I N I S

